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REASONING POWER OF ANIMALS.

MISS KITTY is a favorite member of our family and she is possessed of so many graces and virtues that I am glad to bear witness to her worth in a brief biography. She is an humble creature, but she lives up to the highest capabilities of her nature, and a careful study of her ways has convinced me that the "god-like reason," of which we assume a monopoly, does not go altogether upon two legs, but is shared, in a greater or less degree, by our four-footed companions.

When she came to us at first Kitty was a little waif, timid and shy, and scarcely four weeks old, and her terrified look, as she crept out from underneath the veranda of our country house, told plainly that she was conscious of having come into a world where cats got far more kicks than caresses. This was but natural, for only the day before she had seen her mother slaughtered by a brute of a boy, and had herself escaped merely because she was too young to render her peltry of any value. We gave her food and spoke kindly to her; but it was days before we could lure her into the house, or induce her to accept our caresses. She would start at the slightest sound, and she wore a look of constant fright, as if the tragedy of her mother's death was continually before her. Gradually, however, the terrible vision seemed to fade from her memory and she became very playful and affectionate. She would climb upon our laps and our shoulders, and, putting her soft cheek to ours, would caress us most fondly. Her favorite station during the day was on my writing table, where she was accustomed to curl herself up and, when awake, to watch the movement of my pen as it glided over the paper. She did not appear to understand this at first, but she very deliberately proceeded to investigate the phenomenon. After watching it one day for a time, she reached out her paw and touched the penholder. I kept on writing, and this, I suppose, gave her confidence, for when her paw had followed my hand once or twice across the

sheet, she clutched the pen herself, and attempted to go on with the writing. The result was a huge blot upon the MS, at which Kitty gazed aghast for a few moments; then, giving me a sad look and uttering a plaintive wail, she again seated herself near by and looked on in silence. Daily she came upon my table and watched my proceedings, but never again did she volunteer to aid me in the work of composition.

Thinking to arouse Kitty's artistic sense, I one day placed before her a book filled with engravings of animals. She regarded the strange creatures for a while with some interest; but when I turned the page to one of the cat kind, she gave her head a peculiar toss, by which she expresses contempt or disapprobation, and silently walked away, thus plainly intimating that she could distinguish between the sham and the real. Her strongest admiration was for her beautiful self, and she was, and is, the perfection of feline beauty. She has a full, shapely head, a rounded, graceful form, large, dark, speaking eyes, and a clear black and white coat, as soft and glossy as silk. While still so very young, she never tired of gazing at herself in a glass. One day I set a small toilet mirror upon the floor, so that she could see her reflected image. She gazed unconcernedly upon it for a few moments, but as soon as she observed that the kitten in the glass responded to her every movement she opened her eyes wide with astonishment. Then, looking up at me inquiringly, she proceeded to investigate the toilet glass, walking round and round it, and now and then tapping its wooden back with her paw. When she had apparently become convinced that it did not conceal her own counterpart, she again set herself down before it and began to smooth her coat, and stroke her whiskers, all the while keeping one eye fixed upon the reflected kitten which was performing the same ceremonies. At last she fell asleep, and I set the glass away upon an upper shelf in my library; but she no sooner awoke than she came to me, looked up at the mirror, and by a pleading mew asked me to place it again upon the floor. This I did day after day to the great delight of Miss Kitty, who would sit before it for an hour at a stretch, prinking and pruning herself like any human coquette. One day, having a visitor, I failed to respond as promptly as usual to her request for the glass and she suddenly darted into an adjoining room, where, half an hour later, I found her perched upon the top of a bureau,

and surveying herself in the larger glass that hung above it. She had detected the likeness between the two mirrors. After that she never petitioned me for the toilet glass, for one of her commendable traits is never to ask of another what she can do for herself. But even now, in mature cathood, she exhibits this feminine vanity. Often I come upon her posed before a mirror, and I think no four-footed creature ever assumed quite so many airs as she did a little time ago, when she first saw upon her neck the reflection of a gorgeous leather collar.

Until Kitty was about three months old we considered her too young to profit much by instruction, but then my wife set about giving her a little cat education. She had no difficulty in teaching her to ask for her dinner by a rub against the table leg, and to respond by a wag of the tail to almost any simple question. Very soon the questions "Do you love me?" and "Are you a good little Kitty?" were uniformly answered by an energetic wave of her caudal appendage. Her wants from the first she spontaneously made known by a pull at my wife's dress, or by a peculiar mew which has a wonderful likeness to human speech. From her first domestication she has slept in our chamber, and if now and then shut out of the house when it was locked up for the night, she would climb upon the veranda which runs along the front of our summer residence and tap upon our window for admission. Sometimes she did this at midnight, and we, being fast asleep, would fail to respond very promptly to her summons. In this event she would, on being let in, stamp her foot upon the floor and scold away at us for fully five minutes in a peculiar tone, a kind of mutter that was both rapid and decided.

Among other things which my wife at this time taught the feline lady was to turn somersaults upon the floor, to play at hide-and-go-seek, and to run in a hurdle race around a large room. This last used to come off in the library, the hurdles being piles of books placed at irregular intervals, and Kitty vaulting over them in a race around the apartment. At first she was lured into this performance by a string drawn rapidly across the book-piles, but soon my wife was able to omit this incitement and get Kitty into the race by merely giving her the word at starting. She enjoyed the performance greatly, and invariably asked for it every evening after supper, until she became a mother and engrossed in the duties of maternity.

She was about a year old when this happened, and it has seemed to develop her nature wonderfully. Ever since, she has given clear and striking proofs of that ability to combine means with ends, and that power of deducing one result from another, which we term reason. Her memory also has grown remarkably clear and strong, as a little incident will illustrate. Some ladies whom she had not seen for all of a year, called upon us one day during last summer, and she at once greeted them with every sign of recognition. The hurdle-races had been for a long time discontinued, but on our visitors expressing a desire to again witness the performance, we ranged the books around the room, and, my wife giving the word, Kitty at once vaulted over them with all her old agility. She had made two or three circuits of the apartment when she suddenly paused as if a new idea had just struck her. Her four kittens, now about four months old, were in the room, and they had paused in their play to witness the performance; and now Kitty called them to her, and addressed them in an energetic manner. At first they did not seem to comprehend what she wanted, but, taking her idea, my wife produced a string, and calling, "Little Kitties," proceeded to draw it across the books in the old manner. Instantly the kittens were after the string, and Kitty was after the kittens, going round the room in flying leaps, and urging them forward with cries of encouragement. Once in a while one of the little fellows would dodge the books, or fall out of line, and then his mother would pause in her flight, and cuffing his ears, force him again into the race. Soon my wife withdrew the string, and then they went on without it—five cats chasing one another in a hurdle-race around the room, while we and our guests were shouting with laughter. Often afterward the performance was repeated, and always at its close both the cats and the kittens would come to us for some mark of our approval.

Kitty has exhibited in a high degree the wonderful instinct which guides the cat in training her young, but she has also shown in their education an adaptation of means to ends which, with neither cats nor men, is instinctive. For instance, she would bring live mice and squirrels into the kitchen, and, setting them free, would set her kittens to hunting the creatures. This was instinct, but reason came in when the mouse or the squirrel got away, and hid behind some article of furniture, where neither

cat nor kittens could get at it. Then Kitty would ask my wife or the servant to remove the article; but if it happened to be too heavy for a woman's strength—and it usually was a large cupboard—she would come directly to my "den" in a remote part of the house, and insist upon my going at once to the rescue.

As they grew older Kitty's progeny took to climbing, and occasionally one of them would push himself upon an upper branch of some tall tree, whence it dared not come down, and where Kitty knew she could not venture her own weight in safety. On such occasions she would rush into the house and appeal to my wife, who would call our farmer's boy, and send him up the tree to rescue the endangered kitten. Once on a time, my wife could not be found, and after searching for her in vain, Kitty went herself to the barn, called the boy, and led him to the tree up which was the venturesome kitten. The little fellows thought it rare fun to hide away in the near-by woods where their mother could not find them. To her cries for them at such times they would pay no sort of attention; but they never heard my wife call, "Little Kitties—come home, Little Kitties," but they came trooping towards the house as fast as their little legs could carry them. Observing this, Kitty never failed to ask her aid in such circumstances. On one occasion all four of the kittens had disappeared, and the cat and her mistress had for a considerable time searched for them without success in the neighboring bushes and undergrowth, when suddenly Kitty sprang up a tall pine to its very top, whence she could see all the surrounding woods. In a few moments she was down again, and then making to my wife a peculiar gesture of the head by which she indicates that she desires to be followed, she led her to a considerable distance in a direction never before taken by the kittens, and there, perched upon the top rail of the farm fence, were the four runaways.

Upon another occasion, when the servant was absent from the kitchen and my wife was upstairs in the most remote part of the house, Kitty came bounding up to her, with an urgent demand to be followed. She led her directly to the kitchen, and there was a strange man who had no business on the premises. A like intelligence Kitty showed one dark and stormy night, when we had inadvertently gone to bed leaving her out of doors. About midnight she came to my wife's bed, woke her up and beckoned her to follow. She led her down to the dining-room, where the glass

door, leading out upon the veranda, stood wide open. Observing this, she had entered by that way, instead of coming, as usual, to our chamber window, and, knowing that the door should not be left open, she gave my wife this notice before retiring to her nightly quarters. And this reminds me that though Kitty often makes demands upon me in the daytime, she never wakes me at night, however great may seem to her the emergency, and this she does without having had the least instruction on the subject. Making not the slightest noise, she comes to my wife's side and rouses her by springing lightly upon the bed and gently stroking her face, but she lets me rest in quiet. She has the good sense to know that a man who works with brain or hand all day should be left at night to enjoy unbroken slumber. I could relate numerous instances similar to the foregoing, but I have now space for only a sad catastrophe that befell Kitty and her little family.

The four kittens had grown to be nearly as large as their mother, when Kitty had another litter—three little fellows. Soon afterwards a distemper appeared which swept away nearly all the cats in the neighborhood, and one after another it carried off the four kittens. They were taken at first with a strange drowsiness, then, after moping about for a short while, they went off into the woods to die. This had happened to all the four, when Kitty was herself taken with the distemper. Her younger kittens were below stairs, and the first intimation that we had that she was seized with the malady was the discovery that she had carried the little fellows up to our chamber, and deposited them in the drawer of a bureau which happened to be open. We had been fearful of this, and only the day before had asked medical advice against such an emergency; and now, with the medicines in our hands, we hastened to the woods, where we knew she had secreted herself. After a long search we found her hidden away in some undergrowth, in a comatose condition, and scarcely conscious, but still able to give a slight wag of the tail when her mistress asked, "Are you a good little Kitty?" We then gave her the proper remedies, and bore her back to the house, where she was given every possible attention. By constant care we managed to keep the breath of life in her body; but she refused all food, and for fully ten days lay in a lethargic condition. Meanwhile her kittens had to be drowned, for they were too young to take any nourishment except from their mother. At last she came to her-

self, and then the first thing she did was to go up to the bureau where she had deposited her kittens, and the look of distress that came upon her face when she discovered they were gone was almost human. She mourned for them for many days, and she would not be comforted.

After this event Kitty would scarcely let her mistress go out of her sight. Ever since, she has clung to her with a strange tenacity, and day by day has shown for her a constantly growing affection that is most remarkable. It was on this account, that we this autumn brought her with us when we moved into our winter home, instead of leaving her, as heretofore, with the farmer at our summer residence. She has adapted herself to her new home, and to the change from country to city life, with a readiness that entirely disproves the common opinion that cats are more attached to places than to persons.

EDMUND KIRKE.